

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A polling system and method for establishing forward and return communication links with a plurality of mobile platforms operating within a given coverage region, and further which provides preliminary return channel assignments with each polling message. Each polling message further has an associated ID code designating a particular mobile platform which is registered with a network operations center (NOC) of the system. If the mobile platform does not respond on its designated preliminary return channel within a given time period (e.g., 5 seconds) then the preliminary return channel is returned to a database of available return channels. Polling is carried out more expeditiously because groups of mobile platforms are polled simultaneously and provided with preliminary return channels which accompany the polling messages, and which direct each mobile platform to a designated return channel to use in establishing a return communications link. Polling groups are further sized according to available communication resources.